UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/39
16 January 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 15 JANUARY 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of a communication dated 13 January 1998, which I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would bring this communication to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

98-00907 (E) 160198 160198

/...

Annex

[Original: English]

Letter dated 13 January 1998 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the twelfth monthly report on Stabilization Force (SFOR) operations. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Twelfth monthly report to the United Nations Security Council on Stabilization Force operations

Stabilization Force operations

1. There are approximately 36,300 troops currently deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia, with contributions from all the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and from 20 non-NATO countries. During the reporting period (21 November-20 December), there was no significant change in the force structure, and most of the temporary reinforcements deployed to the theatre in order to provide increased support to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) during the Republika Srpska Assembly elections have redeployed or are redeploying.

2. Over the reporting period, SFOR continued to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance by means of ground and air patrols. A total of 2,600 sorties were flown by combat aircraft, with the SFOR helicopter fleet flying 142 hours.

3. Over the reporting period the main SFOR activities included:

(a) The continued securing of the transmission towers used by Srpska Radio Television at Udrigovo, Duga Nijva and Veliki Zep in Multi-National Division North and at Mount Trebevic and Leotar in Multi-National Division South-East;

(b) Support for OSCE in the conduct of the Republika Srpska elections on 22 and 23 November 1997. SFOR provided security at the OSCE warehouse in Sarajevo and in the OSCE counting house in Lukavica, escorted election materials and provided logistical and communications support;

(c) Support for an investigation and search for evidence by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in Prijedor on 12 December 1997 by ensuring a secure environment during the search to gather documentation to support the trial of Dr. Milan Kovacevic, currently in custody in The Hague. That process was also supported by the International Police Task Force (IPTF) and the Prijedor local police;

(d) The detention on 18 December 1997 of two Bosnian Croats in the vicinity of Vitez who had been indicted for war crimes by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Anto Furundija was detained and flown to The Hague without incident. Vlatko Kupreskic resisted and fired on SFOR soldiers, who returned fire, injuring him. Following medical examination, he was flown to The Hague without further incident. A hand grenade was thrown over the fence into an SFOR camp on 19 December, probably in reaction to the detentions. Minor injuries were sustained by two SFOR soldiers;

(e) Support on 19 December 1997 for an IPTF inspection of the Sarajevo central prison and the adjoining military site to ascertain that no prisoners of war were being held. SFOR provided a secure environment during the inspection, which concluded without incident.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

4. The parties remain generally compliant with most military aspects of the Peace Agreement across the whole area of operations. However, the Republika Srpska Police Anti-Terrorist Brigade (PATB) has not yet met all the provisions of the supplementary instructions to the parties for the Specialist Police. The Deputy Commander (Operations) of SFOR met with Minister of the Interior Paleksic and General Saric, the PATB Commander, on 16 December 1997, to discuss the remaining areas of non-compliance.

5. SFOR continues to encourage all Specialist Police Officers to undergo certification by IPTF and has formed special working groups with representatives of the Republika Srpska Ministry of the Interior to discuss incorporating the present PATB into a new regular police force.

6. During the reporting period a total of 343 military weapon storage site inspections were carried out by SFOR. This included 103 Bosniac, 108 Croat and 132 Republika Srpska sites. As a result of those inspections, the following weapons were confiscated: 1 RPG7 anti-tank rocket, 3 recoilless rifles, 7 62-mm mortars, 14 82-mm mortars, 2 120-mm mortars and 1 120-mm rocket launcher from the Bosniacs; 2 sub-machine guns from the Bosnian Croats; and 4 AT-3 anti-tank missiles, 4,583 30-mm rounds and 287 100-mm rounds from the Bosnian Serbs. In addition, and following IPTF-led police station inspections, the following weapons were confiscated from the Federation: 7 grenades, 1 anti-personnel mine, 375 long-barrelled weapons, 2 rifles, 11 pistols and 554 small arms rounds; and from the Republika Srpska: 25 grenades, 4 rocket launchers, 8 rifles, 38 pistols, 1 64-mm grenade launcher, 12 62-mm rocket-propelled grenade rockets and 3,020 small arms rounds.

7. Movements associated with the Republika Srpska municipal elections were generally unimpaired. However, because of security concerns, the newly elected Bosniac councillors have not yet moved to Srebrenica, and that council remains one of the four, out of 136, that has not held its first session. The other three councils, in Vares, Zepce and Velika Kladusa, have not met for a number of reasons, including security, disruption by local officials and failure to allocate appointments on an equitable basis.

8. Over the reporting period three illegal checkpoints were dismantled. An illegal checkpoint manned by two Bosniac policemen was dismantled in Hadzici, and SFOR patrols near Brčko twice observed three unarmed soldiers of the Republika Srpska Army (VRS) conducting inspections of civilian vehicles with Republika Srpska licence plates. The IPTF checkpoint policy, initiated on 15 May 1997 and carried out with coordinated SFOR support when required, continues to be successful in improving the freedom of movement throughout the area of operations.

9. An SFOR train made the first post-war international journey, from Sarajevo to Germany, on 15 December. The railway is available for commercial traffic, but political obstacles continue to prevent the establishment of regular service. Failure to adopt citizenship and travel document laws and a vehicle registration system to include licence plate designs remains a concern. As a consequence, the Bonn Peace Implementation Council has established new deadlines

for compliance, and has welcomed the intention of the High Representative to use his authority to facilitate the resolution of difficulties.

10. During the reporting period SFOR monitored a total of 538 training and movement activities: Bosnia and Herzegovina Army (ABiH), 301; Croatian Defence Council (HVO), 109; Federation, 1; and VRS, 127. A ban on all training and movement activities was imposed on the Federation Rapid Reaction Brigade from 29 November 1997 to 31 January 1998 because of threatening behaviour and non-compliance during the election period.

11. During the reporting period SFOR monitored 403 demining operations (177 ABiH, 102 HVO and 124 VRS). Although the current ground and weather conditions are not conducive to safe counter-mine operations, there appears to be a continued willingness to try to achieve the scheduled demining activities despite the onset of winter conditions. In accordance with the Ottawa Agreement, destruction plans for anti-personnel mine holdings and manufacturing facilities should be produced by 31 January 1998.

Cooperation with international organizations

12. Within its capabilities, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations in the theatre, and supports the work of OSCE, IPTF, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

13. SFOR has continued to support the installation phase of the municipal elections and assisted the Republika Srpska Assembly elections by providing a robust force, with modest reinforcements, for added security during the polling period. It also provided significant logistical support, including the transport of the ballots and other election materials. SFOR participated in the OSCE election results implementation committees at national and regional levels and has provided advice on its capabilities and assisted in planning.

14. During the reporting period SFOR monitored the parties as they conducted their residual level validation period arms control inspections as part of the subregional arms control agreement contained in article IV of annex 1-B of the Peace Agreement.

15. During the current reporting period SFOR also provided assistance in the efforts of the Office of the High Representative to open airfields by advising on the necessary arrangements for handling civilian aircraft at the Tuzla airfield, and by encouraging the parties to reach agreement on the opening of the Mostar airport to civilian air traffic. The issue has now been raised to the Federation level following disagreement on the airport's management structure. SFOR is also negotiating arrangements with the Department of Civil Aviation and the Croatian and Serbian air-traffic control to make additional airspace available to facilitate civil aircraft overflights.

Outlook

16. In both the Federation and the Republika Srpska, the issues of media and the police, as well as the implementation of the municipal election results, are likely to continue to strain inter-ethnic relations, especially in Mostar. Acts of intimidation and violence may occur in conjunction with return of displaced persons, and a low risk from criminal elements remains.